

To: Hladick, Christopher[hladick.christopher@epa.gov]

From: Ex. 6 Personal Privacy (PP)

Sent: Fri 1/31/2020 2:17:44 PM (UTC)

Subject: Protect Oregon's Drinking Water

Dear Region 10 Administrator Chris Hladick,

I'm writing to ask you to take emergency action under the Safe Drinking Water Act to address groundwater nitrate pollution in eastern Oregon, as requested in a Center for Biological Diversity petition to the EPA earlier this year. For decades residents in this area have been subjected to groundwater nitrate concentrations that routinely exceed both federal and state drinking-water standards, putting the health of people and wildlife at serious risk. This is unacceptable.

To date the state's efforts to address this problem have failed. Every methodology employed by the state confirms that its voluntary measures haven't successfully lowered nitrate concentrations in crucial drinking-water sources to safe levels. In fact the data clearly show trends of increased contamination — and no meaningful change in the approach to the crisis. Indeed, despite awareness by Oregon officials that mega-dairies and their waste-management practices are responsible for much of the ongoing threat, officials are poised to approve yet another mega-dairy in the region.

The residents of eastern Oregon deserve better. As you know the EPA characterizes nitrate as an "acute contaminant" such that even "one exposure can affect a person's health." Elevated levels of nitrate in drinking water are known to increase the risk of a wide range of serious health problems, including birth defects, "blue-baby syndrome," various cancers, thyroid disease and other maladies. And nitrate-contaminated drinking water is especially dangerous for infants and pregnant women.

For all these reasons, I urge you to protect the residents of eastern Oregon by using your authority under the Safe Drinking Water Act to take emergency action and do the following: 1) supply free, clean drinking water to impacted residents, 2) prohibit any new mega-dairy from opening in the Lower Umatilla Basin, 3) investigate the sources of the region's nitrate contamination, and 4) take enforcement action as needed to get the area's groundwater back to safe levels.

Sincerely,

Ex. 6 Personal Privacy (PP)